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Page: 1

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PAGE 01 BUENOS 03423 042205Z  
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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5597

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

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[REDACTED] BUENOS AIRES 3423

E.O. 11652 N/A  
TAGS SHUM, ASEC, PINS, AF  
SUBJECT HARGUINDEGUY SPEAKS ON POLICE CONTROL, HUMAN RIGHTS

1. ARGENTINE POLICE FORCES HAVE UNDER THE SPECIAL EMERGENCY PROCEDURES ALL BUT ERADICATED SUBVERSION AND MUST NOW RETURN TO THEIR NORMAL FUNCTIONS, INTERIOR MINISTER HARGUINDEGUY SAID YESTERDAY (MAY 3) AT A NATIONAL POLICE CONGRESS HELD IN BUENOS AIRES. THE MINISTERS SPEECH TRACED THE BACKGROUND OF POLICE INVOLVEMENT IN THE ANTI SUBVERSION FIGHT, EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT A "KIND OF BULLYING AND INSOLENT ATTITUDE" HAD DEVELOPED WITHIN THE SECURITY FORCES, AND CALLED ON THE NATIONS POLICE CHIEFS TO SEE THAT THE POLICE RESUME NORMAL POLICE TASKS AND PROCEDURES.

2. HARGUINDEGUYS SPEECH RECEIVED CONSIDERABLE PRESS ATTENTION. HIGHLIGHTS OF HIS STATEMENTS ARE PARAPHRASED BELOW: THE POLICE FORCE WAS AFFECTED BY THE CHAOTIC SITUATION WHICH REIGNED BEFORE MARCH 1976. FACED WITH A SERIOUS TERRORIST THREAT AND TERRORIST MURDERS OF THEIR COLLEAGUES,  
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PAGE 02 BUENOS 03423 042205Z

THE POLICE FOUND THEMSELVES WITHOUT PROTECTION OR THE MEANS TO OPERATE EFFECTIVELY. THE JUSTICE SYSTEM WAS DEFORMED. THE FORCES OF THE STATE BECAME INVOLVED,

Current Class: [REDACTED]

Page: 1

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

Current Class: [REDACTED]  
Current Handling: n/a  
Document Number: 1978BUENOS03423

Page: 2

Channel: n/a

IN SOME CASES, IN VIOLENCE COMMITTED BY OUT OF CONTROL GROUPS. THE INABILITY TO CONTAIN THIS VIOLENCE LED TO AN ETHICAL BREAKDOWN. JUST AS THE TERRORISTS TOOK ON THE DOCTRINE, REGULATIONS, UNIFORMS AND EVEN THE OFFICER CATEGORIES OF THE POLICE TO FIGHT AGAINST THEM, THE SECURITY FORCES FOUND THEMSELVES ADOPTING SOME OF THE TACTICS USED BY THE SUBVERSIVES. DISDAIN FOR HUMAN LIFE, INTRINSIC IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE ENEMY, RUBBED OFF ON A FEW (OF THE SECURITY FORCES); THE SUBVERSIVES LACK OF MORAL VALUES AFFECTED SOME AS WELL. WITH THE POLICE PLACED UNDER THE OPERATIONAL CONTROL OF THE MILITARY, AND WITH THE AID OF THE POPULATION, THE SECURITY FORCES HAVE BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN BREAKING THE BACK OF THE SUBVERSIVE GROUPS. IN THE PROCESS, THE MILITARY LEARNED POLICE PROCEDURES, WHILE THE POLICE ADOPTED MILITARY COMBAT TECHNIQUES. THIS PROVED EFFECTIVE IN IMPROVING THE CAPABILITIES OF THE POLICE BUT SERVED TO MILITARIZE THEM AS WELL. THE LACK OF DISTINCTION BETWEEN GROUPS IS NOT GOOD WITHIN THE STRUCTURE OF THE STATE. HARGUINDEGUY URGED POLICE CHIEFS TO USE EVERY MEANS "INSTITUTIONALLY AVAILABLE TO YOU TO BRING YOUR FORCES BACK TO NORMAL POLICE TASKS AND PROCEDURES."

3. COMMENT: THIS DECLARATION BY ONE OF ARGENTINAS TOUGHEST, HARDLINE GENERALS IS AN ENCOURAGING TAKE OFF INTO WHAT WE CAN HOPE WILL BE A NEW SITUATION OF BETTER CONTROL OVER ALL SECURITY OPERATIVES. WE THINK IT POSSIBLE ALSO THAT HARGUINDEGUY HAD WORLD CUP GUESTS IN MIND WHEN HE CALLED FOR POLICEMEN TO MEND THEIR WAYS.

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PAGE 03 BUENOS 03423 042205Z

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Current Class: [REDACTED]

Page: 2

UNCLASSIFIED